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## Seniors invited to speak up

By **JON ROBERTSON**  
jon@dailyjm.com

Residents in the Pendleton and Seneca areas are invited to give two cents on issues affecting the senior community.

SENIOR Solutions will hold free public meetings at Oconee Senior Center in Seneca and the Pendleton Depot in Pendleton in an effort to better serve seniors and identify goals needed to strengthen the community.

"The only way to know what seniors need is to ask them directly," said SENIOR Solutions spokesperson Liz Nasca. "Every opinion counts, and we record everything and go back to the drawing board."

Community forums are held annually across Anderson and Oconee counties at every SENIOR Solutions site. For what usually lasts under an hour, the meetings consist of a facilitator asking questions to participants and offering a time for free thought that will allow for concerns not covered during

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the questioning session.

Nasca said issues discussed in forums range from small issues requiring short-term goal accomplishments to larger concerns that require extensive planning.

For example, participants attending previous forums discussed the need to have seniors establish and maintain interpersonal communication with the community.

SENIOR Solutions leaders have since planned for a visitor program in which area residents connect with seniors to decrease loneliness.

"It gives us a road map as to where we want to go in the future," she said.

Caregivers, senior care providers and other members of the

community are invited, though seniors are seen by organizers as a crucial participation component.

"We welcome every opinion but it's so important to have seniors there," Nasca said.

Two key benefits come from holding meetings in each SENIOR Solutions locations. For one, it helps seniors provide input without having to travel at extensive lengths. Organizers have also noticed the differences between the needs of each community. "We want to reach everyone's individual needs," Nasca said.

For more information on the community forums, including dates and times for additional Anderson County meetings, call SENIOR Solutions at 864-225-3370.